DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 934 FL 018 916

AUTHOR Miller, Fred; Jedan, Nancy
TITLE Eight Strategies for Achieving Integration of Language and Business Instruction.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 12p.; In: Proceedings of the Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages and Communications for World Business and the Professions (8th, Ann Arbor, MI, March 30-April 1, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accrediting Agencies; *Business Administration Education; College Faculty; *Faculty Development; Higher Education; *Interdisciplinary Approach; *Interprofessional Relationship; Languages for Special Purposes; *Language Teachers; Second Language Instruction; Standards; *Teacher Exchange Programs
IDENTIFIERS *American Assembly Collegiate Schools of Business

ABSTRACT

While the need to incorporate language competence into academic programs in business schools is widely acknowledged, so too is the difficulty of forging the faculty alliances needed to achieve this integration. For both language and business faculty, traditional demands of the disciplines, personal training and backgrounds, and the institutions' organizational structures have all been obstacles to effective interaction. Strategies for breaking through those barriers and forging interdisciplinary alliances include the following: (1) recruitment of "moles," or departmental champions of the cause; (2) imaginative use of guest speaker and lecture programs; (3) use of the accreditation and professional development standards set out by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business; (4) gradual development of academic programs; (5) use of business faculty in language courses and language faculty in business courses; (6) stimulation of business faculty involvement in study-abroad programs; (7) identification and exploitation of joint research opportunities; and (8) use of existing internal professional development programs to educate faculty in the other disciplines. (Author/MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"Eight Strategies for Achieving Integration of Language and Business Instruction"

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
G.M Voght
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Fred Miller
Nancy Jedan
Department of Management and Marketing
Murray State University
Murray, KY 42071

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED324934

ABSTRACT

The need for incorporating language competence into academic programs in business schools is widely acknowledged. So too is the difficulty of forging the faculty alliances necessary to achieve this integration. For both language and business faculty, traditional demands of their disciplines, their personal training and backgrounds, and the organizational structures of their institutions have been obstacles to effective interaction. We must break through these constraints if we are to provide our students with the educational opportunities they need. "Academic entrepreneurs" among language and business faculty must find ways to forge the necessary alliances. This paper proposes eight strategies faculty might find useful in pursuing this objective.

I. The Imperative for Foreign Language Competence Among Business Students

No doubt can remain of the serious need for U.S. business to become more competitive in world markets. On the one hand, our historically high trade deficit and our reliance on foreign capital to sustain both public and private domestic debt are evidence of our increasing dependence upon foreign goods and resources. On the other, the rise of more competitive companies and countries in Europe, Asia and even the developing world tell us that we must contend ever more effectively for world markets. While technological development, managerial innovation, and financial creativity all have roles to play in this competitive challenge, the key is effective marketing, in the

FL018916

sense of identifying customer needs and satisfying them with the goods and services we produce. To know what our customers want, we must first know their cultures and speak their languages. Beyond this fundamental task, we must also be able to conduct negotiations, supervise employees, and communicate with financial institutions, channel intermediaries and foreign governmental officials.

To achieve these ends, we must do a better job of preparing our students for a global economic system. We must give them the conceptual and analytical tools to participate in worldwide competition. We must also prepare them to communicate with their customers and counterparts from around the globe. We must find ways to develop cultural knowledge and language expertise within the context of business education. To do so, however, requires us to overcome several daunting obstacles.

II. Difficulties in Forging Language\Business Alliances and Programs

Meeting the demand for skilled business professionals with language capability and cultural knowledge will be a challenge for U.S. education. To equip our students with these skills, we must break some of the bonds of current academic programs in our fields. We must form interdisciplinary alliances to provide the courses, programs, and foreign educational experiences this goal demands. However, faculty seeking such alliances often confront obstacles of academic administration, training and objectives.

Administratively, language and business departments are invariably housed in different academic units, with different types of programs, teaching students in different degree programs. They report to different administrators with different agendas for their units. This results in different performance evaluation processes which focus on different objectives and activities.

In terms of professional training, language and business faculty are products of different types of programs, with little exposure to each other's disciplines. With the possible exception of basic economics courses, language faculty have little exposure to the various business disciplines. Business faculty commonly lack language training, including the basic reading courses which are not required in many business doctoral programs. Thus there is little common background upon which natural alliances can be formed.

Educational objectives also vary between the disciplines. Language programs generally seek to develop language fluency within the context of a broad liberal education. Business programs, even those based on broader general education programs tend to focus on developing practical skills within one of the several business disciplines. In these programs, 'breadth' is often defined first as training in other business disciplines and after that as a wider, liberal education.

To meet the emerging needs of our students and our nation, it is imperative that we develop initiatives to overcome these barriers and find ways of integrating language and business education. The following section discusses eight strategies for doing so.

III. Eight Strategies for Forming Language\Business Faculty Alliances

Strategy 1: Recruit moles

In the parlance of intelligence circles, at least in fiction, a 'mole' is a highly placed, long term agent working within the intelligence service of one's adversary. Within the equally combative, but less deadly, world of academic jousting, this term simply means that we should seek to identify champions for our cause within each other's academic units. Groups of scholars, like nation states, are much more responsive to domestic pressures than to foreign ones. By forming direct, working relationships between faculty in our disciplines, we can build the sort of internal pressure for change that our cause requires.

Strategy 2: Imaginative use of guest speaker and lecture programs

Guest speaker and lecture programs can play an important integrative role in the life of a university. Properly designed, they can draw audiences and invite interaction with faculty from various disciplines. They also serve as a "window on the world', a way of examining events and issues outside the context of our academic specialization. For most schools, they also provide an established pool of resources that can be used to promote academic initiatives.

Using speaker and/or lecture programs to promote language/business alliances has both procedural and conceptual dimensions. Conceptually, the objective is simple. We must seek out speakers credible to both

academic units who recognize the importance of language competence for business students. Who qualifies? Successful international business people, particularly from among the increasing pool of foreign nationals managing their businesses in the U.S. Officers of the U.S and Foreign Commercial Service are also strong, credible candidates. Scholars in international business, intercultural communication, or who specialize in the international dimension of their academic discipline are also possible.

Procedurally, the process of screening, selecting, inviting, supporting and entertaining invited speakers creates opportunities for interaction among language and business faculty. In this process, common interests and concerns can be identified and more substantial initiatives launched.

Strategy 3: Playing the AACSB card

The American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business is the major accrediting body for American business schools. Over 650 schools are members of the organization, with 243 accredited at the undergraduate level and 244 at the graduate. Its accreditation standards affect language/business alliances in at least two ways. The first is the "worldwide dimension" statement in the curriculum standard. It requires that,

> "The purpose of the curriculum shall be to provide for a broad education preparing the student for imaginative and responsible citizenship and leadership roles in business and society - domestic and world wide." (1988-89 AACSB Accreditation Council Policies, Procedures and Standards)

This sounds promising, but there is less here than meets the eye. As applied in the accreditation process, this statement means that every student should be exposed to the international dimension of business in some way. Acceptable approaches include an international business course, international components of business courses required for all students, and international courses or components in advanced classes for students of every business discipline. This minimum common exposure approach tends to devaluate such optional activities as language study, study abroad programs, exchange programs and foreign student recruitment. Unfortunately, the latter are the true foundation for internationalizing higher education in the U.S. The organizations recent conference, "Internationalizing Business Education: Beyond the Basics" promises greater emphasis in the future, but greater support needs to be generated for language studies and foreign educational experiences for business students and faculty.

The professional development standard is also somewhat double edged. As interpreted in the accreditation process, it is, at first blush, discouraging. It places heavy emphasis on publishing in refereed journals. Activities such as faculty language study, conference paper presentations, teaching in study abroad programs, and faculty exchanges are proportionately de-emphasized. The latter are the most obvious forms of language/business faculty alliance.

This standard offers some potential, however. It has produced the predictable proliferation of refereed business journals, many of them interested in manuscripts on international business and

communications topics. The opportunities for joint research projects between language and business faculty have increased. Conferences such as this one could be formalized into professional societies publishing scholarly journals. This would increase these opportunities still further.

Strategy 4: Gradual development of curriculum programs

This is the obvious strategy of building academic programs which integrate language and business study. For some schools with an enviable combination of vision and resources, this might be a very straightforward proposition. At most, however, it is likely to be a gradual, incremental process. Many business degree programs are very structured, allowing little room for maneuver. For this reason, the initial push for language education is more successfully launched at the non-business elective courses in these programs. Proponents of these courses can point to enhanced communication skills and cultural knowledge in addition to language competence as the benefits of these courses over other options.

The next stage in program development might be the creation of minor programs designed to support business degrees. Traditional language minors can fill this role, but specially designed international studies or regional minors might be even more attractive. The latter might combine language study with courses on the history, economic and political systems of a particular country or region. These would provide the breadth of knowledge needed to conduct business in that country or region.

The final step is the construction of joint business/language major programs. A degree in international business with a required language competence is an obvious example. Equally valuable would be degree programs in traditional business disciplines with a language, area, or country component.

This progression assumes an objective of attracting more business student to language study. Faculty pursuing the complementary objective, attracting language students to business study, might follow a similar path.

Strategy 5: Using business faculty in language courses and vice versa

One of the major difficulties experienced by business and language faculty is knowing how their expertise can be of value in courses taught in each other's fields. The language instructor wonders, "What does the business major in a French class need that a French major does not, or vice versa?" The business instructor wonders, "How can I challenge the language students in my classes to apply their language and cultural knowledge to my discipline?"

One of the best ways to answer these questions is to help each other teach. The language instructor who can discuss daily life, appropriate interpersonal behavior, or even advertising patterns in a foreign country can contribute to a discussion of business activities in that country. The business instructor who can analyze the political and/or economic systems of a foreign country and suggest adaptations U.S. firms must make in that environment can contribute to the cultural

knowledge of students studying the country's language. More importantly, by helping each other teach we will be learning more about the integration of our disciplines for our students and ourselves.

Strategy 6: Stimulating business faculty involvement in study abroad programs

Study abroad programs should play a key role in internationalizing business education. They offer excellent educational and cultural acclimation opportunities to students and faculty alike. They should serve as springboards to more extensive foreign experiences such as exchange, research, and internship programs. They also facilitate interactions between language and business faculty that provide a foundation for future cooperative efforts on home campuses. Unfortunately, very little of this potential is being realized. Few business faculty participate in study abroad programs and few programs offer business courses.

Many business faculty are reluctant to participate in study abroad programs because lack the language skills and cultural experience to build the host environment into their courses. They feel somewhat trapped. To teach well in a foreign country, they must have some experience in the culture. To gain experience in the culture, they must teach in that country.

Language faculty can spring this trap and encourage business faculty participation in their study abroad programs by providing the lacking language and culture skills. They can help business faculty identify and invite guest speakers, select companies to visit and

schedule the appointments, and recommend excursions of relevance to business courses. U.S. Chambers of Commerce overseas and the offices of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can help identify contacts for these efforts.

Strategy 7: Identify and exploit join research opportunities

Strategy 3 describes the importance of refereed journal publications in the professional development plans of business schools holding or seeking AACSB accreditation. Faculty in these schools are often reluctant to pursue professional development activities that lack such outcomes. Similarly, they are attracted to activities which provide these opportunities. The challenge then is to find and pursue joint publication projects between language and business faculties. Fortunately, there are several developing areas of research in which this can be easily done.

One such area is that of the European Community's 1992 Integration effort. Current work is focussing on the process of integration as well as the strategic and tactical implications for U.S. firms. Ultimately, however, EC integration will bring the topics of intercultural business practices and communication directly to the forefront of research interest. This is very fertile ground for joint research.

In addition to European integration, the rise of world class industrial powers in Asia raises even more urgently the need to understand the relationship between culture, social institutions, and business practices. We need to discern which socio-cultural approaches

may be adapted from one economy to another and which will require internal cultural invention or evolution to fill a similar function.

There is also a need for greater cross fertilization of international business research. Many secondary reference sources, both print and electronic, index academic and trade publications in foreign languages. Worthwhile literature reviews often exclude these works because the author can't translate them. Joint efforts in this type of secondary research can enhance its applicability.

Strategy 8: Offering professional development opportunities to each other

This option involves using existing internal professional development programs to educate each other. Language faculty could offer seminars for business faculty on beginning conversational skills, proper interpersonal behavior, and core values of foreign cultures. Business faculty could offer seminars for language faculty on the basic functional areas of business, the tools of various business disciplines, and the types of cultural knowledge needed by executives and how this knowledge is used. In this way, we can begin to develop common research and teaching objectives as well as greater appreciation of each other's needs and potential contributions.

In conclusion, these eight strategies describe concrete ways in which we can develop alliances among language and business faculty and programs. They are possible first steps on the long road to achieving the integration of intercultural, language and business skills so necessary in the modern marketplace.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed

March 29, 1991